**Tanzania: Drought Hits Hard**

Staff Writer

4 April 2009

* [Email](http://allafrica.com/sendpage.html?ref=http://allafrica.com/stories/200904061112.html)|
* [Print](http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200904061112.html)|
* [Comment](http://allafrica.com/comments/list/aans/post/post/id/200904061112.html)

Share:

* [on Twitter](http://twitter.com/home?status=Reading:%20Drought%20Hits%20Hard%20http://allafrica.com/c/-3MsGN)
* [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/sharer.php?u=http://allafrica.com/stories/200904061112.html&t=Drought%20Hits%20Hard)
* [Digg](http://digg.com/submit?url=http://allafrica.com/stories/200904061112.html&title=Drought%20Hits%20Hard)
* [Del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us/post?v=4&noui&jump=close&url=http://allafrica.com/stories/200904061112.html&title=Drought%20Hits%20Hard)
* [Muti](http://muti.co.za/submit?url=http://allafrica.com/stories/200904061112.html&title=Drought%20Hits%20Hard)
* [StumbleUpon](http://www.stumbleupon.com/submit?url=http://allafrica.com/stories/200904061112.html&title=Drought%20Hits%20Hard)

Arusha — Ngorongoro District officials fear possible exodus of people and animals from the area due to the ongoing drought spell that has hit Arusha region.

Outgoing District Commissioner, Jowika Kasunga expressed concern here last week that some of the herders in Ngorongoro may have started driving their livestock to the neighbouring districts of Maswa and Bariadi in Shinyanga Region, or to Mwanza in search of greener pastures.

But with the drought scorching vast parts of the country, there is possibility that the exodus may be prolonged to as far as neighbouring country of Kenya, taking into consideration that Ngorongoro residents are mostly Maasai people who are borderless gypsies. That is if Kenya is spared of the drought.

"One more month without rain and the entire District will be doomed, at the moment the situation is at its worst in History," said Mr. Kasunga who will now move to Monduli following recent district commissioners' reshuffles. As we were going to press some areas of the region had started receiving the so-called long rains, though belatedly.

More than 34,000 households in drought-stricken Ngorongoro District in Arusha Region are facing a critical shortage of food and need an emergency supply of at least 9,000 tonnes of cereals.

"We need immediate relief supplies of food for the starving members of the households affected by persistent droughts" the Ngorongoro District Commissioner stated last week.

He said the district was experiencing its worst drought in a decade, with pastoralist families the worst hit because there is too little pasture and water for their livestock.

"Normally, Ngorongoro District receives short-rains in November but there hasn't been a single drop from the sky for the last five months," he pointed out.

The DC said the drought had virtually depleted vegetation and dried up most water reservoirs, causing major fears among the area pastoralists who are now left with little to feed on themselves, let alone food or water for their equally starving animals.

Ngorongoro District has a surface area of 14,036 square km and a population of 165,583 and is home to some 350,000 cattle, 400,000 goats and 300,000 sheep among other livestock.

Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives minister Steven Wassira told journalists in Dar es Salaam three weeks ago that more than 240,000 people in Tanzania were in dire need of food aid, while 12,000 others would have to get food supplies at a subsidised price as the growing food crisis takes its toll in some regions.

He said that was the latest information he had received from the team of observers that the government had sent to 13 regions to evaluate the extent of food shortage and the likelihood of widespread famine.

Mbulu legislator Philip Marmo, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (Policy, Coordination and Parliamentary Affairs), when contacted for comment stated that there would be no specific modalities of dispatching emergency food aid to Ngorongoro.

Speaking on telephone from Yaeda Valley in his Mbulu constituency, Marmo said: "Tell the district commissioner to work more closely with disaster committees in his district in addressing the situation ,"

"... Actually even here (in Mbulu) people are complaining about drought, water scarcity and food shortages" The Minister added.

Phillip Marmo (MP), whose Ministerial office oversees the management of disasters nationally, explained that due to the gravity of the situation countrywide it may not be easy for the government to address individual cases.

"People should continue observing the procedure we have been using all this long of coordination by the Prime Minister's Office's Disaster Management Department, the Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives ministry and the World Food Programme," he maintained.

**Relevant Links**

* [East Africa](http://allafrica.com/eastafrica/)
* [Tanzania](http://allafrica.com/tanzania/)
* [Climate](http://allafrica.com/climate/)
* [Food and Agriculture](http://allafrica.com/agriculture/)
* [Sustainable Development](http://allafrica.com/sustainable/)

He said the relief food supplies that the government would dispatch to needy districts would be given for free only to those who are unable to afford even the token price, while others would have to buy them at a subsidised price.

Marmo said distribution of food aid to the affected regions would be based on a report of the team of experts which helped in assessing the country's actual food needs and the extent to which assistance would be required.

He explained that there was plenty of surplus food in places like Makambako, Songea and Sumbawanga and the government was awaiting details on the situation there before deciding how to proceed.

Regions facing acute food shortages so far include Arusha, Dodoma, Kagera (Bukoba), Kigoma, Kilimanjaro (Same), Lindi, Mara, parts of Mbeya, Morogoro, Mtwara, Shinyanga and Tanga.